



(Photo by Sgt. Michael Garrett 7th MPAD)

Domino!

Sgt. Benjamin Webb, an infantryman with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 325th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, plays dominoes with an Iraqi girl during a break on a patrol in the Adhamiyah district of Baghdad. The Hampton, Va. native split four games with the girl.

First Preparatory Iraqi Nursing Course graduates

Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie
2-10 Mtn. Public Affairs

VICTORY BASE COMPLEX, Iraq - Before Saddam Hussein was in power, Iraq thrived with an excellent health care system. The nurses were well educated and highly respected until Hussein proclaimed the field of nursing unnecessary.

Recently, 18 Iraqi women have defied Saddam's words by successfully

graduating from the first Preparatory Iraqi Nursing Course at the Civil Military Operations Center located in the Victory Base Complex in Baghdad Feb. 19.

"This is happy day for me," said Amel Hadi, a PINC graduate. "I always wanted to be able to help people and now I can."

The six-week course provided lessons in basic health care. PINC Students learned cardiopulmonary resuscitation, wound

dressings and care and how to check vital signs. And being that most of the women who attended the class have children, family planning and the male and female reproductive system lessons were taught.

"This class is designed to teach basic medical skills, but also empower the women," said Air Force Capt. Samantha

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(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar 7th MPAD)

What's the matter, little buddy?

The heartbeat of an Iraqi boy is checked by combat medic Pfc. Christina Baker who is assigned to Company C, 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, during a medical assistance mission in the village of Abidone in Baghdad's Abu Ghraib district.

Arabic Phrase of the Day

il-yoom

**Defined:
today**

Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 66
Low: 50



Tomorrow

High: 70
Low: 46



Saturday

High: 72
Low: 48

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(Photo by Spc. Laura Bigenho 28th Public Affairs Detachment)

Nabaa Dari (left), a Preparatory Iraqi Nursing Course graduate, shakes the hand of Air Force Capt. Samantha Elmore (right), a PINC director, as Col. Toby Pennells (center), the 358th Civil Affairs Brigade commander, looks on at the PINC at the Civil Military Operations Center at the Victory Base Complex in Baghdad Feb. 19.

Progress in Iraqi health care

Nurse

From Page 1

Elmore, a PINC director and native of Sacramento, Calif. "I hope this class will help them find a job and take care of their family."

Currently, Iraq is critically short of nurses. Typically, there are four nurses for each doctor; however, Iraq has only one nurse for every 100 doctors.

"We developed the PINC because we wanted to repair the physician structures in Iraq," said Maj. Darrin Frye, a PINC director and native of West Palm Beach, Fla. "When Saddam was in power, he thought technology could solve medical problems, but when the electricity went out, the patients could not be taken care of. We want to staff the medical facilities with nurses, so they can treat the patients."

One of the goals of the class was to reach Iraqi women who live in rural communities and teach them basic nursing

skills so they can take care of others.

Although the Iraqi women were afforded an opportunity to learn basic health skills, they struggled with terrorist threats during the course.

"One of our students received death threats," said Dr. Ahlam Turki, a cultural advisor for the class.

"Terrorists told her she would be beaten until she bled and then taken back to her family to see."

The student who was threatened did not let the threats of terrorists stop her from pursuing her dream of becoming a nurse.

The class offered many of the students an opportunity of a lifetime.

"This is my first class since middle school," said Madha Alawi Hussein, a 38-year-old PINC student. "I have never been (afforded) the chance to go to class since I was a girl. I am very happy."

Graduates of the PINC will have the opportunity to attend advanced nursing classes in the future. More PINC classes will be held at the CMOC, periodically.

Baghdad in Brief

Iraqi Army troops discover cache in Al Mansour

BAGHDAD-Reacting to a tip from a local resident, Iraqi Army troops discovered a large weapons cache in the Al Mansour neighborhood in the northern area of the capital city Feb. 20.

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army followed the tip to the location of the cache. The cache consisted of three 120mm artillery rounds, two bags of homemade explosives, one bag of plastic explosives, two rocket-propelled grenade launchers, one broken machine gun and other miscellaneous bomb-making materials.

Command wire leads to chicken coop, cache find

AL-TAQA, Iraq - An improvised explosive device found on a road near Al-Taqa, Iraq, led Multi-National Division - Baghdad troops to a cache of weapons Feb. 19.

Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) found an IED and traced the command wire into a chicken coop.

In the structure, they found an old-style camera flash, two AK-47 rifles, a well-maintained bolt-action rifle, a gas mask, a cell phone charger, and two AK-47 magazines.

One of the magazines was full of ammunition. All of the items were seized by the Soldiers and disposed of.



Paratroopers seek out community leaders in Adhamiyah

By Sgt. Michael Garrett,
7th MPAD

BAGHDAD - The streets were filled with residents in the Adhamiyah security district Feb. 15, as troops from the 325th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division got out in the streets and made contact with locals living in the area around Combat Outpost Callahan.

The 325th PIR is helping to implement the new Baghdad Security Plan, aimed at reducing sectarian violence and help the transition to Iraqi self-reliance. They have set up residence at COP Callahan, getting them closer to the area they work in and helping them to create closer ties with the residents in the area.

"Today, we are trying to find out who are the leaders in the area so we can establish contact with them," said Sgt 1st Class Jorge Mazuela, a platoon sergeant for Company B, 2nd Battalion, 325th PIR.

"We also wanted to spread the word that we are here to provide security and help for the people of the community," said 1st Lt. Rusty Shackleford, a platoon leader with Co. B and a Charlotte, N.C., native.

Shackleford said building trust is a key element to helping the residents



(Photos by Sgt. Michael Garrett 7th MPAD)

Spc. Unberto Espinoza, a forward observer with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 325th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, and native of Ventura, Calif., talks to Iraqi children outside of a pediatric clinic while on a patrol in Baghdad's Adhamiyah district Feb. 15.

understand the importance of providing coalition forces with information, allowing them to help make their neighborhood safer.

"Hopefully, we will build trust so they are willing to provide us information," Shackleford said. "Because they are the best source of intelligence we need to clear the streets of insurgents."

Mazuela said being in the streets gives them the opportunity to show Iraqis they are not going to just drive through the area in vehicles, but are going to be a part of the neighborhood.

"We want the people to see us. It shows them we are here. It's more personal, and it's harder for insurgents to operate when we are on the ground," the Miami native said.

"We are trying to tell them, 'Hey, we are here to secure this area,' because we know they have information and can help us," he said.

Mazuela said he thinks the new security plan is a good idea and can provide

the same type of life for Iraqis that he wants for his family back home.

"Just like in the United States, these people just want their kids to be safe, they want to go to work and be able to provide for their family," Mazuela said. "This surge is a good plan, it shows the people we are not going to just leave them, we are giving this government an opportunity to grow."

Mazuela hopes living in the area they are trying to secure will help show some solidarity to the Iraqis.

"I like to think it shows the people we are not leaving them behind; we are here with them. And we are here to help them establish themselves. We want the people to be able to trust the Iraqi government," Mazuela said.

Mazuela said he hopes the relationships established today can help the residents trust, and work with his Soldiers. Above all, he said he wants the residents to know that help is just minutes away.

"Just call us."



Soldiers with Co. B, 2nd Bn., 325th PIR, 82nd Abn. Div., pass a group of Iraqi girls on their way to school while on patrol in Baghdad's Adhamiyah district Feb. 15.

Just another day in the life of a paratrooper

By Sgt. Marcus Butler
4-25 Inf. Public Affairs

KALSU, Iraq - For many people, choosing a career in life is not an easy decision to make. It is even harder to have to make that decision at age 17. Picture a junior in high school in any town, big or small, with the job market not overflowing with bountiful employment and realizing that in one year you would have to enter that world. That is the picture that Spc. Sammy Gardner faced going into his senior year of high school.

"The summer before my senior year I took a job as a tree cutter," said Gardner. "I can still remember myself waking up in the early morning, strapping on tree spikes and scaling 30 to 40-foot trees."

Gardner, a native of Aiken, S.C., did not have many jobs to choose from and knew that the time to make a decision was fast approaching.

After weighing his options, Gardner knew that he did not want to be a tree cutter for the rest of his life, so he decided to make a drastic change.

"I was sitting in the lunch room of my high school and I saw an Army recruiter walk in," Gardner recalled. "I approached him and gave him my information and in a few days, he called."

Being a little cautious about that situation, Gardner stalled the recruiter for close to three weeks. However, he soon cast down all doubts



(U.S. Army photo)

Spc. Sammy Gardner, with 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division.

and concerns and enlisted in the Army.

"When he showed up at my house, I was more than a little hesitant," said Gardner. "My mother was the most surprised, as she knew nothing of my decision."

Gardner entered the Army as a human resource specialist and completed his basic training and advanced individual training at Fort Jackson, S.C.

Being a human resource specialist was not the only ambition of Gardner's. He volunteered for airborne training and the Ranger Indoctrination Program, as well. Even though he was not able to enter into RIP, Gardner got a chance at Airborne, and he did not let anything stop him.

"After all of my training and Airborne

school, I wanted to be in an Airborne Unit. So I chose to come to Ft. Richardson, Alaska," he said.

Fort Richardson is home to the Army's newest airborne brigade, the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division. Coming to this unit not only meant Gardner would be among other paratroopers, it meant he would be going to war. The 4-25th recently deployed to Iraq for a year-long tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Even though Gardner's primary military occupational specialty is human resources, his job in Iraq is on the opposite end of the spectrum.

"When we arrived in Iraq, different sections of the brigade's HHC (Headquarters and Headquarters Company) were being tasked out as a security team to help out other battalions. Naturally, I could not pass up the opportunity and I volunteered," said Gardner.

The security team, on which Gardner is a gunner, is more of a utility section that aids in different missions ranging from escorting the explosive ordnance teams to adding more fire power to elements going on patrol.

"I love doing what I do now," said Gardner. "It gets me out of the office and off the base."

From cutting down trees, jumping out of planes, working in a human resources office to being a gunner on the security team may seem like an odd journey to some. For Spc. Sammy Gardner, it's just a series of events who make him what he is today.

TELEVISION



	8:00p.m.	8:30p.m.	9:00p.m.	9:30p.m.	10:00p.m.	10:30p.m.	11:00p.m.
AFN sports	College Gamenight	NFL Live	Sportscenter		PGA Tour FedEx Cup Accenture Match Play Championship		
AFN prime ATLANTIC	Headline News	ATS/Regional News	The Office	Two and a Half Men	House		CSI
AFN news	MSNBC Live		MSNBC Live		FOX News Live		Studio B